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March 6, 1987

Presidential June 12 Berlin Speech

This draft of the President's June 12 speech in Berlin has been written by John Kornblum to appeal to several audiences in Europe and America.

The basic approach is that of a very personal statement by the President. The goal is to describe important past and future problems in the President's own highly successful, human style. The draft portrays the President's feelings about Berlin and about the debates of the past five years. It concludes with the President's own personal vision for the future of the Western world.

The centerpiece of the speech is a Presidential initiative on Berlin, which is intended to reaffirm the U.S. and Allied commitment to the city and play an active and constructive role in assuring a bright future for Berlin.

By personalizing the speech, I believe that it we can serve several goals.

-- We can remove issues from the abstract and present them in human terms. This is an important consideration in Germany, where at present many people feel that they have lost control of the issues which affect their lives.

-- We can present the President as a thinking, feeling person who cares as much about the division of Europe and the search for peace as Europeans do. This is an important goal in Germany, where young people especially identify the President with an authoritarian, military oriented approach.

-- We can present the President as a person with young and bold visions of the future. This is an important goal in both Europe and the US. In both the United States and Europe, such an approach will help counter the feeling that the Gorbachev has seized the initiative.

The basic message is that of a personal vision by President Reagan for the future of Europe. The vision draws on the experience of the five years since the President's last visit to Berlin.

-- It focuses on people -- the people of Berlin, the people of Europe and the people of the world. Description of policy ideas is drawn from the President's observations of people, especially German young people during his last visit to Berlin.

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-- It focuses on democracy and openness -- drawing from human experience, the draft notes how successful the democratic ideal has been during the past five years. It chides the nay-sayers who predicted a deep freeze in East-West relations or worse. Without being overbearing, the draft seeks to demonstrate that it is the policies of the Reagan administration which have brought us to this successful point.

-- It calls for action -- noting that the foundations of Western security have been restored, the draft suggests that now is the time to renew our dedication to overcoming the division of Europe. It seeks to counteract recent calls for a second phase of detente by tying East-West cooperation to the concept of an open world. The speech calls for a Signal from Berlin which sets forth "real" openness as the foundation for a reunited Germany and Europe.

-- It contains specific proposals -- the vision is not limited to rhetoric. Drawing on Berlin's traditional role as a example for future developments, the speech contains several proposals for helping Berlin become a pathfinder for the free and open world in Europe. Most concrete is the proposal for new air negotiations with the East.

Much of the content is aimed at problems we are having in Europe today. There is impatience, especially among young people, with their own inability to influence the future. This speech argues that the best way to influence the future is through dedication to democratic ideals and to the open society. These points counter some more dramatic proposals now gaining popularity in Europe.

For America, the message is similar. That is, we are not sitting on a static line in Europe -- we are going somewhere. The policies of this administration have brought the strength and confidence to begin to deal with the threat to peace which still exists in Europe. In other words, our commitment in Europe and Berlin is worthwhile. It defends freedom, but it also is leading somewhere.

There is also a message for the Soviet Union. The speech reflects a readiness to deal with Gorbachev, but makes clear that we will not abandon positions of principle to do so. There is also an indirect offer to accept "glasnost" as the best way to solve the problems facing Soviet society.

Finally, the speech addresses fears in Eastern Europe that the United States has forgotten them in favor of big power dealings. The speech rejects the notion of Eastern and Western Europe and states that America was formed by persons from all parts of the continent.

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The goal of this draft is to present a major statement of President Reagan's and America's vision for a dynamic Europe which is not doomed to division and subjugation. Text and formulations have been aimed as much as possible at known sensitivities of Europeans and Americans about problems here.

As the draft is reworked, it will be important to keep in mind that while Europe is tied deeply to the concept of an open world, Germans especially fear moving too far too fast. They shy away from the hint of confrontation which might endanger the gains they have already made. They also expect certain formulations about the American commitment and role in Berlin. The draft contains the generally accepted language on these points.

This draft is admittedly overlong, but is intended to cover all the necessary bases, and get the speech-drafting process off to a good start.

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